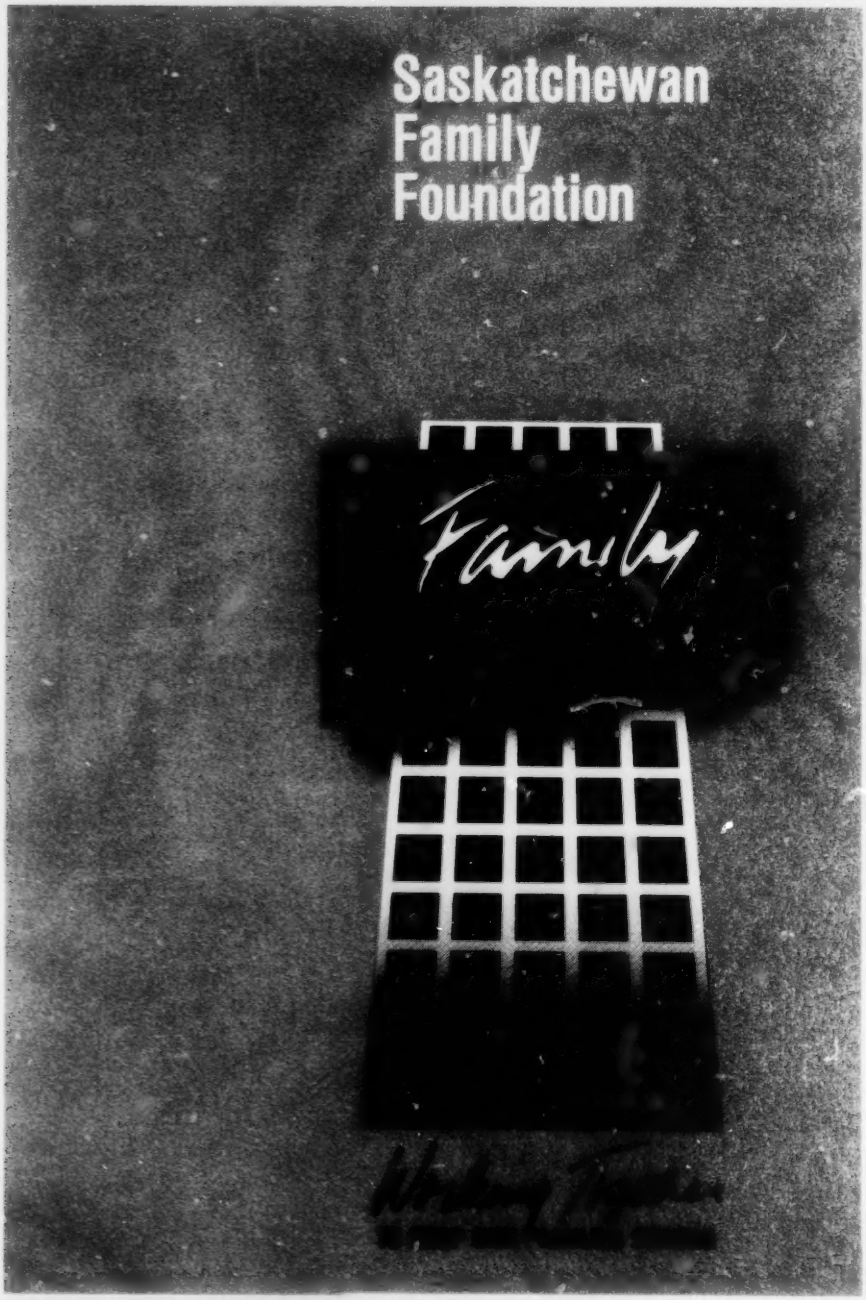
Government of Saskatchewan

Family Foundation

Annual Report 1989-90



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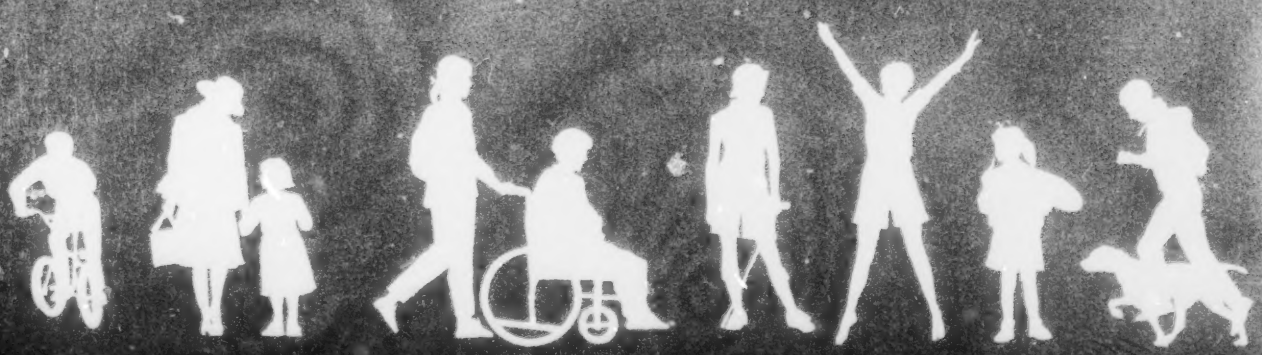


Annual Report 1989-90

Saskatchewan
Family
Foundation

Letters of Transmittal

Her Honour
The Honourable
Sylvia O. Fedoruk, OC, SOM
Lieutenant Governor of the
Province of Saskatchewan

Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the first annual report of the Saskatchewan Family Foundation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1990.

In recent years, it has become more and more apparent that strong and healthy families play a vital role in maintaining our well-being as individuals.

Recognition of this important family role led to a vision of the Family Foundation, a government department that would operate in a unique way. By working with and through existing departments and in partnership with community organizations, the Foundation would build a supportive environment in which families could flourish.

On October 31, 1989, the vision became a reality when Premier Grant Devine established the Saskatchewan Family Foundation to work energetically and enthusiastically on behalf of all Saskatchewan families.

Since assuming my new portfolio as Minister of the Family, I have been consulting with special interest groups, community leaders, and individuals from all walks of life. In many of these discussions, I have heard of the need for long-term solutions. As one participant said,

"We have to look at the cause and consequence of problems. Too often we try to treat the symptom versus the cause."

People told me they want flexible and responsive programs that empower them to get at the root of their problem. These grassroots consultations have confirmed to me that many community groups have both the willingness and desire to work in partnership to strengthen families.

The creation of the Family Foundation demonstrates our government's commitment to families at a time when families are experiencing increasing pressures. We recognize that families have assumed new and varied forms and we're aware that it is vitally important to sustain and strengthen the family in all of its diversity.

Respectfully submitted,

Beattie Martin
Minister

Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Beattie Martin
Minister of the Family

Dear Sir:

I am pleased to submit the annual report of the Saskatchewan Family Foundation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1990.

In the first few months of the Foundation's existence, many individuals and groups involved in family support activities put forward constructive views about the role of the Foundation. I am both encouraged by, and grateful for their support. Their assistance has helped make the Foundation a credible vehicle for dialogue and the development of family policy.

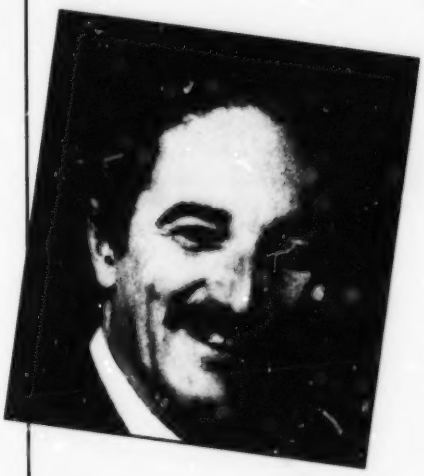
The Foundation's evolving mandate has proven to be flexible enough to deal with a variety of issues related to the problems of families. Saskatchewan communities initiated action on one such issue — child hunger. The Foundation prepared a response that not only met the immediate need for feeding the children, but also took steps to provide for long-term solutions of nutritional education and parental involvement.

Another family-related issue, the problem of troubled and disadvantaged youth in urban gangs, resulted in the Foundation working with communities to develop a number of innovative local solutions.

Response to the Forums About Families program has been enthusiastic. Forums encourage communities to identify pressing concerns and bring together community resources to address them.

Forums have greatly assisted the advocacy role of the Foundation. Through them, the Foundation becomes aware of emerging issues and communicates these issues to you and other appropriate government departments. This process ensures that government is aware of family issues, and the effects various programs and policies are having on families.

Respectfully submitted,



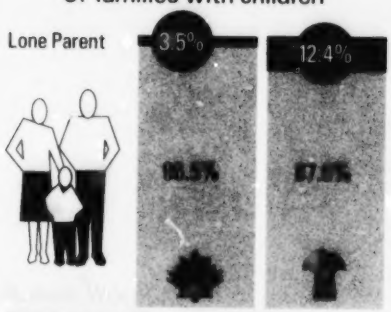
D. Perrins

Dan Perrins, President
Saskatchewan Family Foundation

The Vision

"It is not realistic to expect government to carry the ball ... governments can assist us, but they can't solve the problems. The community has to take hold and pull itself together."

Current composition of families with children



Estimate June 1, 1990 — Statistics Canada

The people who founded Saskatchewan left behind an enduring pioneer spirit, a legacy of self-reliance and personal and social responsibility. This spirit of Saskatchewan grew out of basic family values that encouraged ingenuity, sharing, and working together.

Families are still the single greatest influence in our lives — shaping who we are, how we feel about ourselves, and how we approach the challenges of life. It is vitally important that family values continue to help us reach our potential as self-reliant and responsible adults. Strong families are the foundation of our well-being as individuals, and as a society.

The Saskatchewan Family Foundation grew out of the need for a department that could work effectively across existing government programs and departments in the best interests of all families. Although government, community organizations, schools, churches and businesses all contribute to family life, the Foundation is based on the view that no one sector of society possesses the abilities and resources required to solve all problems. This view was reiterated at many of the consultations. *"The issues are becoming more complex. We need to bring together resources which are already out there."* And that is our intent.

The Foundation, through its Forums About Families program, provides a means for government to encourage the development of effective family support and education programs. Communities plan, organize and deliver these forums, while the Foundation provides funding support and assistance in identifying resources. We were told, *"The government must provide the climate for us (church, service organizations etc.) to operate. It can't do it for us. We must cooperate and participate. We must encourage and promote personal and corporate responsibility instead of the government doing for us."*

Through a policy of consultation and community-based program design, the Foundation strives to harness the creativity of community groups to develop local solutions for local problems.

In support of long-term solutions, the Foundation encourages local leadership and community networks that will continue to function after forums have ended.

A wide variety of groups in the community are committed to strengthening families. Working together, there is much we can achieve.

The Challenge

The world is experiencing continuous and rapid change. As a result, family structure has changed dramatically. *"There is a movement away from the traditional family unit and whether we like it or not, the family is becoming much more fluid."*

Just a few decades ago, divorce was not a common or acceptable event; nor were single parent families, inter-ethnic marriages, the practice of in-vitro fertilization, or dual careers within a marriage.

But in the 1990's, new family lifestyles have emerged that include all these changes as well as increased mobility of the family unit, remarriage, blended families, surrogate motherhood, and single parenthood.

Regardless of their shape, strong loving families bring out the best in us. Saskatchewan has thousands of strong families, but we don't often hear or read about them. The troubled families, the dysfunctional families, get the most coverage.

We hear how economic 'tough times' have increased pressures and stresses at work and home. We hear more and more about family breakdowns, where individual family members are exposed to physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

We hear of families facing poverty — children going to school hungry — and it concerns us. It seems that poverty and lack of opportunity are often passed from one generation to the next.

Recent studies indicate that some parents unwittingly perpetuate negative ways of raising children. Ignorance, stress and frustration contribute to this behaviour, but more often than not, people tend to parent in the same way that they themselves were parented. This cycle can be broken. It is important that parents' self-esteem be boosted as low self-esteem affects their ability to provide a healthy environment for their children.

The family has always been the primary environment that shapes our values, hopes, fears, dreams and self-worth. It is, after all, within our families that our young people form the human bonds that influence all their subsequent relationships.

We must keep pace with changing times by building on the resources already present in families.

"We put most of our resources into the short-term and not the long-term. We need to build self-esteem and success into training and education for parents ..."

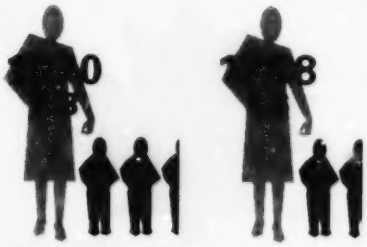
Population by marital status

Estimate June 1, 1990 — Statistics Canada

The Changing Family

"Middle aged and younger people need some education regarding aging ... perhaps it would prevent elder abuse ..."

Canada's declining birth rate



Source — Statistics Canada

Recent trends indicate today's families are smaller, and birth rates are lower. Fertility has declined, and women are having children later in life. The number of couples without children at home rose during the period of 1961 to 1986. Single parent families increased by one-third during this period, while the number of two-parent families declined slightly.

Although the number of female single parent families is on the rise, pregnancy and childbearing among adolescents has declined in recent years. Separation, divorce and death therefore have contributed to the increase in lone-parent families.

Marriage rates are changing. Over the same 25-year period, the rate of first marriage fell by 23 per cent, while the incidence of common-law marriages grew slightly. People are marrying later in life, and the divorce rate is increasing. The number of remarriages of both men and women increased six-fold between 1961 and 1986, suggesting a large increase in blended or step-families.

The age of family members is another feature that is changing dramatically. Our families are aging, and with an aging population, the caregiving needed in our society is likewise changing. Today, adults can expect to spend more of their lives caring for their elderly parents than for their children.

Economic pressures and social changes have altered the labour participation rates of family members. There are more sole-earner, single parent families; and more dual-income, two-parent families today than in the past. Women's participation in the workforce has risen tremendously from 35.4 per cent of women in 1966 to 57.4 per cent in 1988. The single wage-earning family is now outnumbered.

The Family Foundation recognizes that these vast changes in such a short period of time present unique challenges. Working together we can face those challenges and emerge strong and vital, as families and as a society.

Saskatchewan Family Foundation Mission

Working together with the people of Saskatchewan, the provincial government has established the Family Foundation. Its purpose is to support, strengthen and sustain Saskatchewan families and communities through a period of profound change within the province and the world.

Mandate

As a government department, the Foundation has assumed a wide variety of responsibilities. Its prime function is to assess and coordinate various programs developed to assist families by:

- talking with people throughout Saskatchewan about issues of concern to their families and communities;
- relating family concerns to Cabinet;
- working together with various government departments, community groups, agencies and individuals to ensure that all programs and policies serve the best interests of families;
- promoting information and services designed to help family members improve their family living skills;
- reviewing the effects of existing government programs and policies on families.

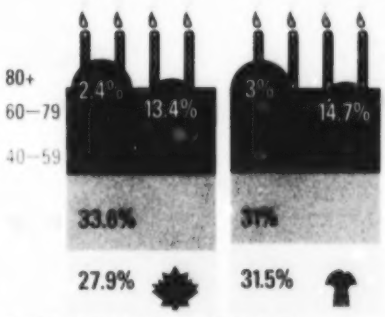
Objectives

- to provide a focus for government activities and initiatives which may enhance family relationships in Saskatchewan;
- to organize consultations between the minister and a broad range of groups and individuals in the province;
- to develop inter-departmental initiatives and budget proposals regarding:
  - family living skills
  - work and family life
  - education and schools
  - family violence
  - community, recreational and cultural agencies
  - child hunger;
- to assist communities in the development of community family workshops (Forums About Families);
- to lead a collaborative policy review and coordination process with other departments responsible for family matters by:
  - reviewing Cabinet submissions
  - initiating reviews of existing policies and programs;
- to develop communication and education strategies which promote positive lifestyles and teach family living skills;
- to work on emerging issues such as children in street gangs .

The Foundation approaches family concerns by working with and through non-governmental organizations as well as government departments and agencies.

"Building the family is a job we all share. We must do it one brick at a time. It all starts at home and within our circle of friends. One problem at a time ..."

Population by age group



Estimate June 1, 1990 — Statistics Canada

The Year in Review

"If you allow something to undermine the family unit, then there is no support system left."

The Foundation owes much of its early conceptual development to the Department of Social Services. In 1989, Social Services introduced a number of initiatives to improve government and community understanding of the issues and problems facing families.

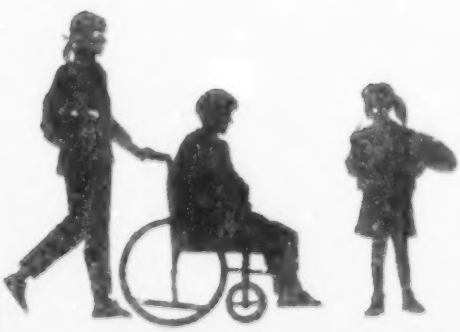
One such initiative, the national Symposium About Families, was held in Regina in July of 1989. It was a tremendous success, and had significant influence in the establishment and direction of the Saskatchewan Family Foundation. Sponsored by the 10 provinces, with more than 750 delegates attending, the symposium launched a national discussion on ways of strengthening Canada's families. It was very productive, providing a long list of options for policy-makers both inside and outside the government to consider.

Following this event, Premier Grant Devine announced his intention to appoint a minister responsible for family issues, and to create the Saskatchewan Family Foundation. In October 1989, the provincial government established the Foundation with the Honourable Beattie Martin serving as the first Minister of the Family in our province's history.

The Foundation was created to acknowledge the importance of families in our society, and in recognition of the increased pressures families face today. During this past year, the Foundation has undertaken a number of initiatives designed to strengthen and support Saskatchewan families.

For example, two committees, a Deputy Ministers' Steering Committee on Family Policy and an associated working committee, worked together to compile and rank by importance all proposed budget initiatives across government which have an impact on families. The Foundation subsequently submitted this material to Cabinet for consideration in the development of the 1990-91 budget, thus providing some direction and insight to the allocation of funding.

A series of ministerial consultations were held. People in 20 communities participated, talking to the minister



Working

TO KEEP OUR FA

The Year in Review

about family and community concerns, and contributing to the direction and mandate of the Family Foundation. These consultations confirmed that Saskatchewan's family environment is not as sustaining, nor as supportive as it could, should, and probably must be, if the province's citizens are to reach their full potential.

The Foundation successfully launched the Forums About Families program. Forums give people in the community the opportunity to explore topics of local concern. High attendance at the forums underscores the reality that many people are eager to obtain advice and assistance to improve their families and communities. Discussions have included: marriage preparation, parenting, budgeting and family finance, seniors' issues, and interpersonal family relationships, to name just a few.

The Foundation coordinated government's response on child hunger, based on consultations it arranged between the minister and school boards, mayors, parents and individuals involved in feeding programs. As a result of these discussions, a number of new initiatives to deal with this problem have been proposed.

The Boy Scouts and the Saskatoon Family Support Centre held a camping weekend through the Forums About Families program.

These are just some of the highlights of a productive year in which the Family Foundation grew and developed in response to the needs of Saskatchewan people.

Together

MILIES STRONG

Ministerial Consultations

"These consultations are important. When problems are brought out into the open and the community works together, there can be big changes."

"Sharing Family Traditions" was the theme of Saskatoon's Family Fun day.

More than 400 people attended ministerial consultations to talk to the minister and Foundation staff. These consultations are ongoing, allowing special interest groups, community leaders, and individuals from all walks of life to share what they perceive to be important to the families in their communities. Suggestions are received about the kind of assistance they feel is required from government. At the same time, the minister discusses with people what they think the role of the Foundation should be, and explains how it is meant to provide a link between the government and the community, and what services are presently available.

Consultations have covered a variety of family topics. The positive response to initiatives that strengthen families indicates there is reason to be optimistic about the future of Saskatchewan families.

Family Policy

The Family Foundation's mandate is to strengthen Saskatchewan families by examining the effect of government policies on families. Do the policies help families become more self-sufficient, more united, and more able to enjoy satisfying relationships? Do they provide comprehensive support to families who require assistance?

To address these questions regarding government policy, the Family Foundation speaks with families across the province, and consults with other government departments, community groups and organizations providing programs and services to families. Working in partnership, the Foundation identifies how existing policies can be adjusted and what new action can be taken to provide further support to families.

During the past year, the Foundation's steering committee of deputy ministers and the inter-departmental working committee each met regularly to develop policy options in six key areas. These areas include family living skills, work and family life, education and schools, family violence, child hunger, and community recreational/cultural agencies, and municipal government. Here are their findings:

Family Living Skills

Saskatchewan people believe that parenting is one of the most important tasks of life and one for which many individuals are not prepared.

Work and Family Life

Families find it increasingly difficult to manage both their responsibilities at home and in the workplace.

Education and Schools

Parents seek greater involvement in their children's education.

Family Violence

Communities continue to be concerned about family violence in all its forms, including physical assault, intimidation, mental or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, elder abuse, deprivation, and financial exploitation.

Child Hunger

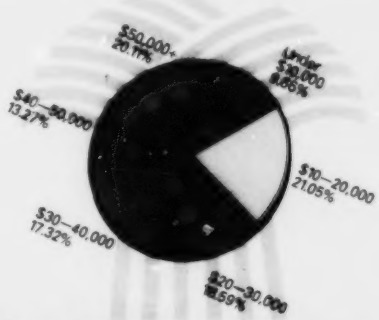
School boards in the province have been contacted to assist in identifying and suggesting solutions to this problem. Mayors of five Saskatchewan cities have been consulted, as well as individuals and organizations involved in operating feeding programs for children.

Community Recreational/ Cultural Agencies and Municipal Government

Current recreational, sport and cultural progams are normally individually based and age-segmented. Family-focused activities tend to be de-emphasized. The Foundation encourages the development of inter-generational family activities.

"Parental involvement is the key to the child's success in adulthood ..."

1985 Sask household family income



Source — Statistics Canada

Forums About Families

The Forums About Families program sponsors community organized workshops and seminars that teach family living skills and explore issues of concern to families.

The first Forums About Families were held in November 1989, and responded to the need for information on family issues such as parenting.

Forums About Families provide an opportunity for communities to plan family education programs that address local needs, and use local resources. Partnership and cooperation is fostered between local groups, and the groundwork is laid for further combined efforts involving various groups within the community. Working together is the key to success.

Once a community group or organization identifies a need, the Family Foundation assists with speakers and other resources and provides financial support.

Six Regional Steering Committees offer advice and assistance at the local level. These committees also act as an informed resource and advisory body to the Family Foundation.

During the year, Forums about Families explored a wide variety of topics, including:

- parenting
- marriage preparation
- understanding child behavior
- budgeting
- caring for aged parents
- peer counselling
- sexuality
- youth leadership

Forums must have the goal of strengthening families. They must respond to a real and clearly identified need within the community that relates to families. They should encourage community partnership and participation.

By providing joint funding, the Family Foundation and the departments of Social Services, Health, Education, and Justice are working together to meet the needs of Saskatchewan communities.

A review committee, composed of one representative from each funding department plus a representative from Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (SADAC), reviews all Forum applications and makes funding recommendations.

Inter-departmental Policy Coordination

In 1989-90, the Family Foundation worked in conjunction with other provincial government departments to pursue the best interests of families.

A deputies' steering committee on family policy, chaired by the Family Foundation, met regularly during the past year. Members of this committee included individuals from the Departments of Health, Social Services, Justice, Education, Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation, Executive Council, the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, the Indian and Native Affairs Secretariat, and the Women's Secretariat.

An associated working committee, consisting of senior policy and program representatives from the same government departments, also met regularly to follow through on the activities initiated by the steering committee.

These two committees coordinated and reviewed the effect of government programs and policies, evaluated the impact of proposed new initiatives, and led policy development on family issues. These committees are still intact, intent on serving Saskatchewan families to the best of their ability.

Response to Hunger

Saskatchewan communities have expressed concern for children whose nutritional needs are not being met.

During the year, the Minister of the Family and the Family Foundation were very active in this area, consulting with community representatives to find solutions to the problem of child hunger.

It was suggested at these hunger consultations that planning should respond to the short-term needs of feeding the children, as well as addressing the long-term needs of providing support and education for the families.

There is now widespread recognition of the fact that whole communities share responsibility for hunger. Families, schools, churches, service clubs, agencies, businesses, and municipal, provincial, and federal governments, all have an obligation to ensure that no child goes hungry.

The Foundation assumed the role of coordinator of specific hunger initiatives, assisting diverse groups to communicate and work together in partnership towards the development of effective services to address this problem.

Organizational Chart

Administrative Services

Administrative Services provides administrative and financial support to the Foundation. Principal responsibilities include budget management, financial services, property management, and computer services.

Primary objectives in 1989-90 included staffing and physical organization of the Foundation, along with setting up essential administrative systems.

1989/90 Expenditure Summary

October 3, 1989 - March 31, 1990

Subvote	Expenditures
01 Family Foundation	124,619
02 Payments to S.P.M.C	17,865
TOTAL	143,484

Forums About Families

Statistical Report, October 3, 1989 to March 31, 1990

Fiscal Year	Approved Applications	Completed Forums	Expenditures	Participants
1989/90	46	32	$58,590*	7,773

* Forums About Families are coordinated by the Family Foundation with funding provided by the Departments of Health, Justice, Social Services and Education.